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County Health Rankings

How Yakima Stacks Up... and What Should be Done About It

Yakima, WA – The Yakima Health District (YHD) will host a community event at Perry Technical Institute Wednesday, April 21st, 2010 from 6-8 PM. The event will focus on the *2010 County Health Rankings*, released in February by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. A presentation will be given discussing how the rankings were compiled, as well as how the county fared in 30+ health measures and groupings. Eight areas in which Yakima County's rates are much higher (or lower) than the state average will also be explored in greater depth. These areas are self-reported health status, teen birth rate, Chlamydia rate, diabetic screening, high school graduation rate, child poverty, single parent households, and the violent crime rate. The *County Health Rankings* event is free and open to the public.

"Our hope for this event is to open discussions amongst a wide breadth of community partners and the public about how to improve our community, and in doing so, our standings," explains Laura Charters, Assessment Specialist for the Yakima Health District.

The *County Health Rankings* model uses pre-existing data to rank the health of counties within each state in the nation. The rankings are compiled based on community health factors including disease rates, access to medical care, health behaviors, education, social and economic issues, violent crime, and environmental measures. The project's model weights each measure according to its impact on health. Two major rankings are then derived: Health Outcomes and Health Factors. Health Outcomes, where Yakima County ranked 32nd of 39 counties, is based on mortality and morbidity (deaths and quality of life). Health Factors, where Yakima County ranked 34th of 39, is based on health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment.

"These data allow us, not only to compare ourselves with counties throughout Washington, but also to set benchmarks for positive changes in our community's future," notes Dennis Klukan, Administrator for the Yakima Health District.

YHD has performed additional analyses on data from the *County Health Rankings* since its release in February. This includes applying the *County Health Rankings* model to derive rankings among the 20 counties in eastern Washington. These data will be presented along with the statewide rankings during the event on April 21st.

Special thanks to Perry Technical Institute who has generously donated the use of their auditorium for this community event. Perry Technical Institute is located at 2011 W Washington Avenue in Yakima.

For more information on the *County Health Rankings*, visit www.countyhealthrankings.org. To view Yakima County's rankings specifically, go to <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/washington/yakima>.